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## *Press Release*

# Sharon Man Admits to Stealing Holocaust Heirloom from neighbor

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A Sharon man has admitted that he stole a family heirloom smuggled out of Europe during the Holocaust from the home of neighbors who so trusted him they gave him a key to their front door.

Steven Zaharoff, 58, (DOB 3-21-51) admitted he stole the family heirloom from his neighbor, Charles Marks, as the elderly Mr. Marks was moving from his home at 11 Robin Road in Sharon into a retirement community. Marks has since passed away.

The painting, an oil landscape of snowy woods, was slashed by rampaging Nazis as they ransacked the Marks home in Germany on Kristallnacht, the “night of broken glass” in November 1938 when thousands of Jewish homes and businesses were pillaged and destroyed. The Marks family smuggled the painting out of Europe and had it repaired. It hung in the dining room of the Marks home in Sharon for decades. The Marks children identified it as one of the few possessions in the family that dates before fleeing Nazism.

District Attorney William R. Keating has registered the painting with the Art Loss Registry in London. “The value of this painting is not monetary. It lies in a history that must never be forgotten,” District Attorney Keating said. “It belongs with Mr. Marks’ descendents”

Following an extensive investigation led by Detective Kevin Bishop of the Sharon Police Department, Zaharoff was charged in Stoughton District Court with Larceny of Property worth under \$250, Larceny from a Person over age 65 and Entering a Dwelling by False Pretenses to Commit a Felony.

Zaharoff was indicted by a Norfolk County Grand Jury on June 5, 2008 on three counts: Entering a dwelling for a felony by false pretenses (Ch. 266, Sec. 18A) which is punishable by 10 years in state prison; Larceny from a Person over age 65 (Chap. 266 Sec. 25(a)) which is punishable by up to 5 years in State Prison; and Larceny of property valued at under \$250 (Ch. 266 Sec. 30) a 1-year misdemeanor.

Superior Court Judge Janet Sanders ruled in favor of Zaharoff on a motion to dismiss the Entering a Dwelling and Larceny from a Person over 65 charges, leaving only the 1-year misdemeanor Larceny charge.

After Zaharoff changed his plea to guilty on March 12, 2009, the District Attorney's Office asked that he be given the full year, with 6 months to serve and the balance suspended for 3 years. The Court instead sentenced him to 1 year of probation with 50 hours of community service.

Zaharoff has not waived from his claim that after he took the painting and took pictures of it to send to an auction house, it was then stolen from his garage although he never reported that “theft” to police.

*Any and all defendants mentioned are legally innocent until proven guilty.*